

Briefing Paper Regarding Allocation of Spring Chinook Impacts to Fisheries Above McNary Dam and Select Areas

- The 15% allocation of impacts for the 2002-2003 policy included consideration of four separate fisheries
 - The Wanapum tribal fishery
 - The Ringold sport fishery
 - The Snake River sport fishery
 - The Select Area sport and commercial fisheries
- The Ringold sport fishery and the Wanapum tribal fishery occur in the area of the Columbia River above the mouth of the Snake River. Both fisheries have had relatively minor impacts to the ESA-listed spring Chinook stocks, which in part have helped to justify these fisheries.
- The Snake River sport fishery was implemented in 2001 when a record number of spring Chinook returned to the Columbia River, and the majority of the return was projected to return to the Snake River. Hatchery fish in the Snake River were nearly 100% marked to facilitate a selective fishery. This was the first spring Chinook sport fishery in the Snake River since the late 1960s.
- The Select Area fisheries are part of an on-going program designed to provide fisheries in off-channel areas of the Columbia River. Fisheries are designed to target net-pen fish released into these areas. Minor levels of strays are sometimes encountered in these areas.
- Prior to 2002, impacts to ESA-listed stocks in these fisheries had been included in the Biological Assessments for mainstem non-Indian Columbia River fisheries. A formal allocation of impacts was not established.
- Because the fisheries above McNary Dam occur on two separate ESA-listed spring Chinook stocks (Upper Columbia and Snake River) the allocation can be applied separately to each area.
- Part of the original rationale for the 15% allocation is that it would provide for a management buffer for fisheries below McNary Dam if run sizes or catch compositions change in-season.
- The staff sought to obtain other ESA coverage for the Snake River, Wanapum tribal, Ringold and Select Area fisheries, but was not successful.
- Because the states were not successful in obtaining other ESA coverage, fisheries above McNary Dam were included in the recreational fishery share of impacts and Select Area fisheries were included in the commercial fishery share of impacts. Constituents supported this during the public meeting process (prior to the 2004-2006 Policy).